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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0090  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0800  
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 09 NICOSIA 000168

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE SIPDIS

FOR G/TIP, G, INL, PRM, AND EUR/PGI; FOR EUR/SE MCLEGG-TRIPP AND  
EMELLINGER; STATE PLEASE PASS TO USAID

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SUBJECT: REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS -- SEVENTH ANNUAL TIP REPORT SUBMISSION

REF: 06 STATE 202745

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¶1. (U) Paras 3-6 are sensitive but unclassified --not/not for  
Internet distribution.

¶2. (U) Embassy Nicosia hereby submits information for the April 2006  
- March 2007 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. Embassy point of  
contact is Terry Steers-Gonzalez, Political Section, Tel: (357)  
22-39-3364, Fax: (357) 22-39-3467. Approximately 80 hours (FSO-03)  
and 55 hours (FSN) were spent in preparing this material.

¶3. (SBU) Answers in this para are keyed to the questions in reftel,  
para 27, "Overview."

¶A. Cyprus is largely a destination country for trafficked women  
working in the sex industry. Of the 79 women identified as  
trafficking victims during the reporting period, 21 were Ukrainian,  
15 were Moldovan, 13 were Filipina, five were Chinese, five were  
Romanian, four were Russian, four were Moroccan, three were Polish,

two were Bulgarian, two were Latvian, and one each was Uzbek, Belarusian, Dominican, Israeli and Paraguayan. Fifty-nine of these identified victims testified or will testify in cases against their traffickers/employers. The government issued 3,367 "artiste"-category work permits during the reporting period, though the actual number of foreign women to work in cabarets under this category was less due to multiple entries. The government also issued 320 work permits to foreign women to work in pubs. Immigration police reported that women rotate among cabarets in different cities throughout Cyprus. There were also reports of trafficking in the area administered by Turkish Cypriots, north of the Green Line, which is outside of the government's control (septel).

The Social Welfare Department assisted 126 foreign women in 2006. Some of these women stayed in government-run temporary shelters; 69 stayed at the Limassol shelter run by the STIGMA organization; and others stayed with friends, receiving benefits from the Social Welfare Department.

Of the 69 victims housed throughout the year at the Stigma shelter, 28 were Ukrainian, 17 were Moldovan, six were Russian, six were Filipina, four were Romanian, three were Moroccan, three were Chinese and two were Bulgarian. The shelter reported that victims were typically young women in their early 20s.

There continued to be reports of women coming to Cyprus from China on student visas, who then engage in prostitution and, in some cases, find themselves victims of sexual exploitation.

There were no reports of men or children being trafficked.

1B. The government has demonstrated at the highest levels the political will to address trafficking. Since the last TIP report,

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police raids, arrests and prosecutions all increased. The government approved the use of the former prison director's estate as a publicly-supported shelter for victims of trafficking; it is scheduled to open in late March. In early February, the Social Welfare Department finalized and disseminated to relevant government agencies a handbook that standardizes procedures for the handling of trafficking victims. In late February, the Ministry of Interior co-hosted with the Council of Europe a regional anti-TIP conference. It also printed 50,000 flyers and 800 posters for a demand-reduction campaign, scheduled to start in March. As part of this campaign, the Ministry secured rights to an UN-produced public service announcement, to be aired on CyBC, Cyprus's state television network. The Police's Office to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings is now staffed with three full-time officers. They, too, printed 10,000 flyers for an anti-TIP public awareness campaign, distributed during the reporting period by community police.

According to relevant government agencies, NGOs and journalists, as well as the victims themselves, foreign women are trafficked to Cyprus primarily for the purpose of prostitution. The most common methods of forced compliance are withholding salary, confiscation of travel documents, threat of deportation, and restriction of movement and association.

There are also credible reports of women from the Philippines, India, and Sri Lanka, who come to Cyprus to work as domestic household help, are forced to work excessively long hours and are denied proper compensation and benefits. NGOs report that private sector employers, commonly restaurants and farms, have withheld pay and threatened migrants illegally working on Cyprus. Some of these employers supposedly facilitated the migrants' entry into Cyprus on work permits that were unrelated to their true employment.

1C. The government does not lack the resources to combat trafficking; however, relevant government agencies still complain about the lack of staffing and training for anti-TIP efforts. General police corruption is not viewed as a problem; however, during the reporting period, there were three specific cases of officials' involvement in TIP-related activities. See para 5.M.

¶D. The Ministry of Interior coordinates implementation of Cyprus's "Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Sexual Exploitation of Children." It, along with other relevant government agencies, assessed anti-TIP efforts at a February conference co-hosted by the Council of Europe. See para 3.B. These same officials have cooperated fully with Embassy officers throughout the reporting period, providing general and specific assessments, statistics, and other information.

¶4. (SBU) Answers in this para are keyed to the questions in reftel, para 28, "Prevention."

¶A. The government acknowledges that trafficking is a problem and is

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committed at the highest levels to combating it.

¶B. The Ministries of Interior, Labor/Social Insurance, Justice/Public Order, and Commerce/Industry/Tourism, as well as the Attorney General, are involved in anti-TIP efforts. (Note: The Social Welfare Department is under the authority of the Ministry of Labor/Social Insurance; the police are under the authority of the Ministry of Justice/Public Order. End note.) The Ministry of Interior was appointed "coordinator" for implementation of Cyprus's Plan of Action.

¶C. In February, the Ministry of Interior co-hosted with the Council of Europe a regional anti-TIP conference. High ranking government officials participated, and the event received extensive local media coverage. The Ministry of Interior unveiled at the conference its demand-reduction campaign, scheduled to commence in March, which includes 50,000 flyers, 800 posters, and UN-produced public service announcements to be aired on state TV CyBC. The Ministry also produced, and the Migration Department distributed, Greek-language and English-language brochures to all temporary workers entering Cyprus; this initiative is in addition to the brochures distributed to "artiste"-category workers, on which Post reported last year. During the reporting period, TIP arrests received broad media coverage, and police representatives were interviewed on a number of TV and radio talk shows. Police, too, printed 10,000 flyers for an anti-TIP public awareness campaign, distributed during the reporting period during community policing activities.

¶D. During the previous reporting period, the Ministry of Justice provided Cyp 5,000 (approx. \$11,350) to the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS), a local NGO, to produce a demand-reduction campaign, including 15,000 flyers and 1,000 posters. The campaign commenced in March 2006 and is still ongoing. The flyers/posters have been distributed to colleges and government agencies island-wide and were e-mailed to 3,000 recipients worldwide. The NGO has recently secured permission to place its posters, free of charge, throughout Nicosia. MIGS also received government funding for TIP-related research, which was carried out during the reporting period; the findings have not yet been released.

¶E. During the year, the government improved its cooperation with anti-TIP NGOs. These NGOs reported that some government agencies -- particularly the Ministry of Justice, including the police, and the Social Welfare Department -- supported their anti-TIP activities. Unlike in previous years, the Stigma shelter now reports a good working relationship with the police and with the Social Welfare Department, despite the fact that the latter turned down the shelter's grant request because Stigma board members would have also received compensation as shelter employees. NGOs, however, also noted that the Migration Department, under the Ministry of Interior, has not been responsive to their complaints about inadequate support for victims who wish to remain in the country to work in different

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fields of employment.

¶F. Immigration police monitor immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of trafficking. According to the Ministry of Interior,

as of February, "artiste"-category work permits are sent directly to ROC embassies/consulates to be personally collected by the employee-migrant. Previously, work permits were instead sent to the employer-applicant. Consular or administrative staff brief the employee-migrant, and provide her a brochure containing employment and emergency services information; she is required to sign a statement saying she has been briefed and received the information brochure.

¶G. The Ministry of Interior meets regularly with the various government agencies that have anti-TIP responsibilities; the Ministry's Permanent Secretary serves as the overall ROC coordinator and has, therefore, been identified to Embassy as the point of contact on TIP. The government does not have a public corruption task force; however, there is a government-appointed, independent committee that examines complaints against the police, including complaints involving corruption.

¶H. On May 12, 2005, the Council of Ministers approved Cyprus's "Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Sexual Exploitation of Children." It was drafted by a group of experts with input from the Ministries of Interior, Labor and Social Insurance, Justice and Public Order, and Commerce, Industry and Tourism, as well as the Attorney General, Ombudsman and NGOs. The Ministry of Interior was appointed "coordinator." The action plan has been distributed to all relevant government agencies as well as NGOs, and is available in electronic form, Greek-language and English-language, from the Ministry of Interior.

¶5. (SBU) Answers in this para are keyed to the questions in reftel, para 29, "Investigation and Prosecution of Traffickers."

¶A. Cyprus's law enforcement authorities rely on a January 2000 anti-TIP law based on 1997 EU regulations, making it a felony to engage in the sexual exploitation and trafficking of adults and children. Under this law, a trafficker may be convicted even if there is evidence that a victim, including an adult victim, consented to the trafficker's activities, which are indicators of the crime. The law also stipulates that victims have the right to file civil lawsuits against anyone responsible for their exploitation, and it holds those responsible liable to pay special and general compensation covering all costs incurred by the victim, including repatriation. The civil courts may also order the payment of punitive compensation based on the extent of exploitation suffered.

A more comprehensive anti-TIP bill has been finalized by the Attorney General and should be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval in March; the bill would then be reviewed by Cyprus's

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House of Representatives. The new law will bring Cyprus into compliance with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, as well as make the country's laws consistent with other multilateral instruments. It will expand the definition of trafficking beyond sexual exploitation and will provide for a 30-day reflection period for trafficking victims.

Law No. 11 (III) of 2003, ratifying the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Crime, criminalizes forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, or servitude.

¶B. The 2000 anti-TIP law obligates the state to provide protection and support for victims and prescribes punishment of up to 15 years for cases involving adult victims and 20 years for cases involving child victims. Accessories to trafficking cases can be punished with fines up to CyP 10,000 (approx. \$22,700) and/or 10 years imprisonment.

¶C. Forced labor, slavery or servitude is punishable with fines up to CyP 15,000 (approx. \$34,000) and/or 12 years imprisonment, when committed against adults, and with fines up to CyP 50,000 (approx. \$114,000) and/or 20 years imprisonment, when committed against children. It is illegal for employers to confiscate a foreign worker's passport or travel documents, switch contracts without the worker's consent, or withhold payment of salaries. There is no

information available on whether persons have been convicted for such offenses or on the possible punishments imposed.

¶D. Rape or forcible sexual assault is punishable with up to life imprisonment. Attempted rape is punishable with up to 10 years imprisonment.

¶E. It is illegal "to live off the proceeds of prostitution" or "to procure a woman for the purpose of prostitution," thus criminalizing the activities of brothel owners and pimps. Police claim that trafficking victims are not arrested on the grounds of the above laws.

¶F. During the reporting period, police investigated 60 suspected trafficking cases, compared to the previous year's 47 cases. Of those 60 cases, 48 were prepared for trial under the anti-TIP law, and the remaining 12 were prepared for trial under prostitution-related laws.

Within those 48 cases prepared for trial under the anti-TIP law, 94 persons were separately charged, compared to the previous year's 74 persons.

Of the 48 cases prepared for trial under the anti-TIP law, 34 were prosecuted, of which 24 are still pending trial; four persons were convicted and four received acquittals, while one case remains "nolle prosequi" and one was dismissed. Sentences ranged from four to nine months imprisonment. Of the 14 cases yet to be prosecuted,

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nine are still under investigation, one was declared non-existent, and four were otherwise disposed of.

Within the 12 cases prepared for trial under prostitution-related laws, 22 persons were separately charged.

Of the 12 cases prepared for trial under prostitution-related laws, six were prosecuted, of which three are still pending trial; three persons were convicted. Sentences ranged from a Cyp 250 (approx. \$570) fine to 12 months imprisonment. Of the six cases yet to be prosecuted, four are still under investigation, one was declared non-existent, and one was otherwise disposed of.

Of the 71 pending cases prepared for trial under the anti-TIP law from previous reporting periods, 43 were eventually prosecuted, of which 17 are still pending trial; 13 persons were convicted, while three cases remain "nolle prosequi," two were dismissed, two were withdrawn, and six were otherwise disposed of. Sentences ranged from nine to 14 months imprisonment.

¶G. Trafficking victims staying at the Stigma shelter report that they were recruited in their home countries by local "agents" looking for dancers; some also responded to Internet advertisements. They traveled to Cyprus alone and were then met at one of Cyprus's international airports by a local "impresario," who was in possession of the foreign woman's "artiste"-category work permit. These "impresarios" allegedly work on contract for legitimate employment agencies licensed by the state; the agencies sign the women's travel documents and work contracts. "Impresarios" are usually Cypriots. Police and NGOs both report that former "artistes," who have since married Cypriots, often work with their husbands or former employers to recruit women from their home countries.

¶H. Police actively investigate cases of trafficking resulting from evidence collected during unannounced raids, undercover sting operations, and complaints submitted directly to them by trafficking victims or NGOs. In 2006, police conducted 164 raids on cabarets, pubs and other establishments. The police maintain that, in all the trafficking cases that resulted in convictions, the victim testified in court. They claim that the primary reason for not getting more convictions is the victims' refusal to testify. Cypriot law allows evidence obtained through undercover investigations, but not through wiretapping.

¶I. The police stated that TIP training is a required unit in the



curriculum of all criminal investigators. Also during the reporting period, the police academy organized four one-week anti-TIP training seminars. Officers continue to attend training sessions overseas with INTERPOL, EUROPOL and CEPOL (the European Police College).

¶J. During the reporting period, police assisted with 12 Interpol and 12 Europol international trafficking investigations, compared to the

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previous year's five international trafficking investigations. Cyprus has international cooperative agreements with Greece, Russia, Syria, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Estonia, Lebanon and Ukraine. The government does not, however, cooperate with Turkish Cypriot authorities in investigating or prosecuting trafficking cases.

¶K. The ROC constitution bars the extradition of Cypriot citizens. While third country nationals may be extradited, no foreign citizens charged with trafficking have been so extradited during the reporting period.

¶L. There is no evidence of government involvement in, or tolerance of, trafficking on a local or institutional level.

¶M. See para 5.L. However, there are three separate cases of government officials' involvement in trafficking-related activities. In all three cases, the government responded promptly and decisively.

NGOs complained that a mid-level officer of the Migration Department, who was tasked with issuing "artiste"-category work permits, and who allegedly had close ties with cabaret owners and employment agents, attempted to influence trafficking victims against identifying their traffickers. In October, this official was removed from his position because of the NGOs' complaints; he was not prosecuted, however, due to a lack of evidence.

A special police constable, arrested on prostitution-related charges, was sentenced on December 18 to 14 months imprisonment. He was dismissed from the police.

Another police officer was charged with sexual exploitation and, although acquitted by the court, was dismissed from the force.

¶N. N/A

¶O. (i) The ILO Convention 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor was ratified by the ROC on November 27, 2000.

(ii) ILO Conventions 29 and 105 on Forced or Compulsory Labor were ratified by the ROC on September 23, 1960.

(iii) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography was ratified by the ROC on April 6, 2006.

(iv) The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was ratified by the ROC in August 2003.

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¶6. (SBU) Answers in this para are keyed to the questions in reftel, para 30, "Protection and Assistance to Victims."

¶A. Under the 2000 anti-TIP law, the government is required to protect individuals who bring trafficking complaints. This includes providing shelter as well as medical and psychiatric care until victims recover from any traumatic experience. Convicted traffickers may be required by the courts to pay the costs of the above services. The government has assigned to the Social Welfare Department the responsibility of advising and giving counsel to

victims. During the reporting period, it provided services to 126 trafficking victims.

It also finalized the "Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures for Handling Cases of Victims of Trafficking," which was approved by the Council of Ministers and disseminated to all relevant government agencies.

The Social Welfare Department, per the 2000 anti-TIP law, provided shelter for identified trafficking victims in subsidized homes, usually eldercare facilities, for up to three weeks. It also provided financial support and psychological services to victims housed at the STIGMA shelter, as well as to others who chose to stay with friends. Significantly, the government has approved the use of the former prison director's estate in Nicosia as a publicly-supported shelter. The Social Welfare Department is in the process of recruiting personnel for the shelter, which is scheduled to open in March.

1B. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order provided CyP 10,000 (approx. \$22,700) to the Stigma shelter for accommodation of and services to trafficking victims.

1C. The government's "Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures for Handling Cases of Victims of Trafficking" formalizes the identification system used by police and the referral mechanisms to transfer victims to the care of the Social Welfare Department. Also, the police report a 63 percent increase this year over last year in the number of TIP-related calls to their crime-prevention hotline.

1D. Trafficking victims are allowed to stay in Cyprus if they cooperate with the investigation and prosecution of their former employer-traffickers. During that period, the government provides shelter, financial support and legal assistance.

Most foreign women arrested during police operations but unwilling to cooperate with the investigation/prosecution are deported. There were seven such cases during the reporting period.

Though the rights of trafficking victims are generally observed by the government, there were instances during the reporting period in which foreign women were charged with crimes before they could be identified as victims. Police claim that such arrests, such as that

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of a Moldovan woman in October, were intended to keep the women in the country to testify against their employer-traffickers. In these instances, charges were often dropped and the women released within 24 hours. Afterwards, they received protection and services as identified trafficking victims.

1E. The government encouraged victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers. During the reporting period, police identified 79 victims, of whom 59 were willing to testify against their employer-traffickers. A victim may remain in Cyprus and seek alternate employment only if she is assisting the investigation/prosecution. If she is willing to return to testify against the employer-trafficker, a victim may leave Cyprus temporarily.

Victims may sue their traffickers for civil damages upon the traffickers' criminal conviction.

1F. There is no publicly-supported shelter in Cyprus for trafficking victims, though one is scheduled to open in Nicosia in March. Instead, the government has provided shelter at three government-subsidized eldercare facilities, where victims can stay for up to three weeks. They receive financial support and other welfare services, such as psychological and legal assistance. Victims are also referred to the STIGMA shelter. There were no child victims reported during the year.

1G. The Social Welfare Department reportedly offers continuing training to social workers handling trafficking victims. In addition to the four anti-TIP training seminars at the police academy, officers have participated in anti-trafficking exercises organized

by the Greek government.

1H. N/A.

1I. Stigma, with ties to the international organization La Strada, was the only NGO on the island to work directly with trafficking victims. Founded by Father Savvas Michaelides, a Cypriot Orthodox priest serving the Russian community in Cyprus, the Stigma shelter, located in Limassol, has recently received some government support. See para 6.B. There were no other international organizations or NGOs that worked with trafficking victims.

SCHLICHER